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AIM FOR THE HEART

THE FILMS OF
CLINT EASTWOOD

HOWARD HUGHES

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PART ONE
THE WESTERNS

In the early sixties, western films were still locked in a range war for audiences with TV westerns – and losing. What cinema needed was an out-of-towner, a hired gun, a specialist who could turn the tide and entice audiences from their comfy sofas back into theatres, where seats cost money. Their unlikely saviour was an Italian director named Sergio Leone.

Hollywood had counterattacked TV in the late fifties with a series of hugely popular, adult-themed big-screen westerns – including *The Man from Laramie* (1955), *The Searchers* (1956), *The Big Country* (1958) and *Rio Bravo* (1959) – but they were few and far between. By the early sixties some interesting genre one-offs had driven the western into new and interesting territory. Paramount among these was a remake of Akira Kurosawa's Japanese action drama *Seven Samurai* (1955) as *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), which was a massive hit in Italy where the heroes' mercenary adventures struck a chord.

***A Fistful of Dollars* (1964)**

When Sergio Leone cast Clint Eastwood in a trio of westerns, *A Fistful of Dollars* followed by *For a Few Dollars More* (1965) and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), it gave the genre a much needed fuel-injection of style, wit, violence and grit. The 'Dollars' trilogy made Eastwood a stratospheric celebrity climber, from TV star to global success story, and his character 'The Man with No Name' who 'sold lead in exchange for gold' is still probably the most recognisable gunslinger in cinema. Eastwood's hero killed with passion, but no compassion, and was a slender moral cut above the villains he dispatched. 'No Name' was a loner (like perennial western stalwarts Gary Cooper, Alan Ladd and James Stewart) and had no relationships with women and decidedly untrustworthy ones with men. He was just on the side of 'law and order', but only for his own ends – his rewards were a fistful of dollars, a cartload of valuable 'Wanted' corpses or a coffin brimming with stolen gold coins. In an era when image was everything, the trappings of 'The Man with No Name' – the Mexican poncho, the cheroot cigar, the two-days' growth of stubble – were as recognisable and marketable as The Beatles' black suits and mop tops, Barbarella's skimpy space outfits, *raffiné* Holly Golightly's Givanchy, Tiffany diamonds and cigarette holder, and James Bond's tux and tie.

There have been many different versions of how Eastwood came to be cast in *A Fistful of Dollars*. The most accepted one is that in the autumn of 1963 a script called 'Il Magnifico Straniero' ('The Magnificent Stranger') arrived at the William Morris Agency, Eastwood's representatives. Eastwood was hardly the first choice for the lead role of 'Joe the Stranger' – the list of actors who had already been contacted included Henry Fonda, James Coburn, Charles Bronson, Henry Silva, Rory Calhoun and Richard Harrison. The project was to be financed by Italian, West German and

Spanish investors and directed by Leone, then known only for ‘sword and sandal’ flicks. The film’s entire budget was only \$200,000 and none of the actors approached would accept the \$15,000 offered. Eastwood recognised the verbose, thick manuscript, which resembled a telephone directory and ‘wasn’t even typed up in regular script form’, as a rewrite of *Yojimbo*, a successful 1961 Japanese samurai film directed by Kurosawa, which he’d seen on its American release as *Yojimbo – The Bodyguard*. Eastwood loved Kurosawa’s action comedy, masterfully shot in black and white Tohoscope, and though not especially keen on the dialogue rewritten in Leone’s adaptation, he accepted the offer and flew to Rome in April 1964, for the \$15,000 all-in salary – even though he and Paul Brinegar were making that kind of money in a single engagement as entertainers on the rodeo publicity tours for *Rawhide*.

Interviewed in 1971 for *Photoplay*, Eastwood recalled, ‘In *Rawhide* I did get awfully tired of playing the conventional white hat. The hero who kisses old ladies and dogs and was kind to everybody. I decided it was time to be an anti-hero’. Leone had screened ‘Incident of the Black Sheep’ from *Rawhide*, some sources claim with an eye on casting Eric Fleming, but this seems unlikely as Fleming hardly figures in the story. Leone cast Eastwood, though the hero envisioned by Leone was a far cry from Rowdy Yates. Leone’s co-scriptwriter Duccio Tessari had wanted to call the



1.1 Spaghetti Westerns: Bounty hunters ‘The Man With No Name’ and Colonel Douglas Mortimer in *For a Few Dollars More* (1965); Clint Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef on location in Los Albaricoques, Almería. Image courtesy Kevin Wilkinson Collection.

protagonist Ringo. The original script called him 'Texas Joe', while the published script (issued in Italy in 1979) calls him Joe, lo Straniero ('Joe the Stranger'), but all UK/US publicity marketed him as 'The Man with No Name'.

Joe arrives by mule in the Mexican border town of San Miguel, where he discovers from cantina owner Silvanito (Pepe Calvo) that the district is controlled by two rival gangs of bandits and smugglers: the Rojos, who deal bootleg liquor, and the Baxters, big gun merchants. The gangs employ hired gunmen and pay in dollars; in Leone's original script, both factions were Mexican (the Rojos and the Morales). 'If you don't mind doing a little killing, you will have no trouble finding someone eager to pay you', Silvanito advises. The stranger sees an opportunity to make a few dollars and exploits the gangs' rivalry, hiring himself as a gunhand to the Rojos. The Rojos' leader, Ramon (Gian Maria Volonte), leads a raid on a Mexican army convoy, stealing their shipment of gold, and tries to make peace with the Baxters. But Joe stirs up trouble, taking payment from both factions. Soon the feud is as fervid as ever, with the gangs shooting it out in a cemetery. Joe helps Marisol (Marianne Koch), a woman who has been blackmailed into living with Ramon as his mistress, to escape, but the subterfuge is discovered and the Rojos capture Joe and beat him up. He escapes and the Rojos search the town, massacring the Baxters, burning them out and shooting them down. Whisked out of town by coffin-maker Piripero (Josef Egger), Joe recovers in a disused mine. When Silvanito is caught bringing supplies to Joe and is tortured, the stranger returns to San Miguel for the last time, killing the Rojos in a duel before unhitching the coffin-maker's mule and riding back into the sierras.

When Eastwood arrived in Rome, he brought his *Rawhide* props (boots, gunbelt, spurs and Cobra-handled Colt), plus a hat, some black drainpipe jeans and a battered sheepskin waistcoat. Leone and costume designer Carlo Simi draped him in a rather unusual addition – a fringed Spanish poncho, essentially a square piece of fabric with a slit for the head, decorated with a series of concentric patterns, including a rope motif, criss-cross lines and geometric Grecian designs. This poncho appears green in some washed-out prints of the film and almost black in Italian prints, but it's actually brown. In the original script, Eastwood's character, a Confederate sergeant called Ray, steals it from a Mexican peon swimming in the Rio Grande. In *Fistful's* duel scenes, the stranger flicks this poncho over his shoulder to quicken his draw. Eastwood also grew a stubbly beard for the role, possibly inspired by Toshiro Mifune, who played Sanjuro Kuwabatake, the unshaven lead in *Yojimbo*. One key mannerism Eastwood stole from Mifune was his thoughtful chin rubbing. Joe smokes cheroots throughout, even though Eastwood was in reality a non-smoker and the cigar is rarely lit. It is as Joe that he perfected the Clint squint, reputedly caused by the strong Spanish sunlight. The stranger's costume, props and mean demeanour fashioned Eastwood's screen image, which he honed into what became known by critics and fans as spaghetti westerns, Euro-westerns, macaroni westerns, pizza westerns or Western All'Italiana ('Westerns, Italian-style'). After years of being told that he looked 'wrong' for starring roles, that he was too tall, too ungainly, that he didn't look like the popular stars of the day, or that he squinted too much, he found that in this new style western he *was* the look.

Leone shot *Fistful* in Italy and Spain. The budget didn't allow much room for luxury and Eastwood even brought along his own stunt double – Bill Thompkins from *Rawhide*. It is Thompkins as Joe who gallops through the desert in the night-time riding sequences; he also plays the Baxter gunman in the green shirt during the hostage exchange. San Miguel was filmed in 'Golden City', a western set at Hojo De Manzanares (north of Madrid) and the adobe village of Los Albaricoques in Almeria, southern Spain. The interiors of Rojo's residence and its whitewashed walled courtyard were Casa Da Campo, a Madrid museum. The small adobe house where Marisol is imprisoned, currently a hotel called Cortijo El Sotillo, is near San Jose in Almeria, while the Rio Bravo gold ambush was filmed on the River Alberche at Aldea Del Fresno. Filming commenced on Rome interiors in April at Cinecitta studios, moved to Hojo De Manzanares and its environs (for the graveyard shootout and the town scenes) and then wrapped in the Almerian desert.

A notable aspect of *Fistful* is the severe bloody beating Joe the Stranger suffers at the hands of the Rojos in their wine cellar, probably the worst onscreen pummelling Eastwood has taken in his entire career. As Eastwood remembered, 'In the 'Dollars' films, stoic was the word. It was comedy and yet it was played dead straight. The violence tag was hung too tightly around my neck. The fact that they were made by an Italian in Europe had some people going in as edgy as I was when I made them. I personally don't think of them as violent, only perhaps as black humour'. In *Fistful*, Joe is so badly injured (one eye is almost closed) and immobilised that the coffin maker has to sneak him out of town in a casket. This rough treatment reappeared in many of Eastwood's later films and his heroes have had to recover quickly to defeat the villain: a symbolic 'resurrection'.

Fistful contains two quintessential action moments in Eastwood's transformation from clean-cut TV western hero to screen idol. In the first, he guns down four Baxter gunmen hanging around the San Miguel corral, for \$100 in Rojo blood money. Having already spooked Joe's mule as a warning, the quartet tells him to leave town. The gang find their threats amusing, but the stranger doesn't: 'My mule don't like people laughing, gets the crazy idea you're laughing at him'. His mood suddenly changes, from amiable cowboy kidding around to lethal killer demanding an apology. Joe flicks his poncho over his shoulder and the tension mounts, until in a flash, guns blaze and four Baxters bite the dust. Having ordered three coffins before the confrontation, Joe corrects his order: 'My mistake... four coffins'. The *Saturday Review* scathingly noted that 'Eastwood... makes full use of his one expression', but the actor's underplayed performance and his delivery marked Eastwood as a new type of action movie star, one for whom understatement and stoicism were trademarks.

In the film's finale, Joe faces Ramon and four of his men in the plaza of San Miguel, near a water tower. The stranger announces his return with two dynamite explosions, which wreath the street in dust, unnerving his opponents: it's a powerful image, with the stranger striding out of the dust cloud. Earlier Ramon has quoted a Mexican proverb to the stranger, claiming that a Colt .45 is inferior to a Winchester rifle. We already know from Ramon's demonstrations of marksmanship that he

always aims for the heart. 'Shoot to kill, you better hit the heart', goads the stranger, 'The heart Ramon, aim for the heart, or you'll never stop me'. Ramon fires at Joe repeatedly, hitting him, but each time the stranger gets back to his feet, seemingly supernatural. Eventually, when he's within pistol range, Joe reveals that he's been wearing a sheet of iron strapped to his chest, an armour hidden under his poncho, and there are seven bullet dents in the area of his heart. Real-life professional killer and lawman Jim Miller, known variously as 'Killin' Jim' and 'The Deacon', wore a breastplate during his gunfights. One of the most deadly, not to say indestructible shootists, Killin' Jim survived 14 gun battles.

Fistful's memorable score was composed by Ennio Morricone, a school friend of Leone's. The main theme (or 'titoli') deployed acoustic guitar, bells and whip-cracks backing the melody, voiced by a whistler and an electric guitar (both performed by Alessandro Alessandroni), while I Cantori Moderni ('The Modern Singers') supplied harmonies. This accompanied the pop-art title sequence, deploying rotoscope, an animation process that converts action from the film into garish, comic-strip violence. The titles begin with hypnotic smoke rings, which reveal the galloping hero and ricocheting gunshots herald Eastwood's name onscreen. Elsewhere Morricone used the ominous piano and harmonica of 'Almost Dead' (for the stranger's arrival in town), the cacophonous percussion and trumpet of 'The Chase', the eerie build-up to 'Without Pity' (for the Baxter massacre), and the Mexican trumpet 'Deguello', a funereal Mariachi backed by strings and chorus. Entitled 'A Fistful of Dollars' on soundtrack albums, this was released by RCA as a 45rpm single under the title 'The Man with No Name'. This music and that of Eastwood's later spaghetti westerns were inexorably linked to the actor throughout his career. They became Eastwood's 'theme tunes' and his later films occasionally deployed Morricone-style musical cues as knowing references to his career as 'The Man with No Name'.

Fistful was released in Italy as *Per Un Pugno di Dollari* ('For a Fistful of Dollars') in September 1964, to great word-of-mouth success, eventually becoming the biggest-grossing Italian film of all time up to that point. Italian posters for its premiere trumpeted 'The most recent and sensational western film with the new American idol'. For international release, United Artists dubbed the film *A Fistful of Dollars* (shortened in the animated title sequence to simply *Fistful of Dollars*) and prepared a high-profile publicity campaign ahead of the opening in the US in January 1967. Key art featured Eastwood in his poncho, with the taglines 'He's going to trigger a whole new style in adventure', 'In his own way he is perhaps the most dangerous man who ever lived!' and 'The first motion picture of its kind. It won't be the last!' *Fistful* was rated 'M' in the US and 'X' in the UK, even after it was trimmed for violence; subsequent DVD releases, rated '15', are uncut. In the US, *Fistful* took \$4.25 million in 1967 and eventually grossed \$14.5 million. Many Italian and Spanish westerns of the sixties and early seventies capitalised on the success of Leone's film, with derivative titles and poncho-clad heroes, including 'Vance Lewis'/Luigi Vanzi's *For a Dollar in the Teeth* (1966 – aka *A Stranger in Town*), starring Tony Anthony as the stranger and Frank Wolff (Leone's original choice for Ramon Rojo) as bandit leader Aguila ('The Eagle'). Eastwood made

better films and he also made much more money, but *A Fistful of Dollars* facilitated his leap from TV fame to international superstardom. When, in December 1980, the Museum of Modern Art paid tribute to Eastwood with a one-day retrospective of his films, the works chosen were *Escape from Alcatraz*, *Play Misty for Me*, *Bronco Billy* and *A Fistful of Dollars*.

***For a Few Dollars More* (1965)**

Fistful certainly wasn't the last motion picture of its kind and Eastwood was soon back in Italy and Spain filming a sequel, literally *For a Few Dollars More* – his salary this time was \$50,000. As 'the anti-hero to end all anti-heroes' (as *Films and Filming* christened him), Eastwood was again a gunfighter, now a bounty hunter named Manco. The story was based on an original outline by Leone and his brother-in-law Fulvio Morsella, with a screenplay by Leone, Luciano Vincenzoni and an uncredited Sergio Donati.

Manco and Colonel Douglas Mortimer (Lee Van Cleef) are two deadly bounty killers, ridding the American southwest of renegade outlaws and cashing in their rewards. When the territory's most notorious criminal El Indio (Gian Maria Volonte) escapes from prison, the pair teams up to scoop the \$10,000 reward offered 'Dead or Alive'. Indio and his cadre of bandidos target the three-ton safe in El Paso, a supposedly impregnable fortress containing almost a million dollars. Working to Mortimer's stratagem, 'one from the outside, one from the inside', Manco infiltrates Indio's gang and tries to sabotage their plan, but Indio is smarter and the gang flees with the loot. The robbers lie low in Agua Caliente, a New Mexican pueblo, where Mortimer also joins the gang and carefully opens the safe without destroying the cash. The bounty killers steal the money and hide it, before being caught and viciously beaten by Indio. Indio releases the gringo gunmen and sets them against his gang in a gun battle, but soon only Indio is left alive, and in a final duel, Mortimer faces Indio and kills him. The colonel reveals that Indio raped his sister, who then killed herself, and that Mortimer has been seeking vengeance ever since. His vendetta complete, the colonel allows Manco to keep the reward.

This time Leone had a larger budget than *Fistful* – \$600,000. Leone visited the US in January 1965, re-signing Eastwood (for \$50,000), and also hired Lee Van Cleef (for \$17,000). Van Cleef was a supporting actor from fifties western, sci-fi and gangster movies; he had guested in two episodes of the 1964–65 season of *Rawhide* but was currently employed as a freelance artist. Leone wanted Henry Fonda, Charles Bronson or Lee Marvin as his colonel, but their unavailability led to Van Cleef's casting – Leone noted: 'His glare makes holes in the screen'. Eastwood received top billing, as the star who would ensure the film's success, even though ex-soldier Colonel Mortimer, 'the best shot in the Carolinas', was the focus for much of the story.

Leone again filmed the interiors at Cinecitta but lensed the majority in Spain: partly near Madrid, but mostly in Almeria, with Eastwood present at most locations. The desolate Spanish deserts, sierras and *ramblas* (dried-up riverbed canyons) took centre stage, as a memorable and breathtaking backdrop. The great riding scenes,

filmed in the Almerian sierras, where Manco loses a posse from El Paso, display Eastwood's consummate horsemanship to best advantage; Bill Thomkins didn't double for Eastwood in this sequel. The towns depicted were 'played' by a variety of film sets. White Rocks was a set at Colmenar Viejo, near Madrid; Tucumcari was the San Miguel set at Hojo De Manzanares; a western set at Cinecitta appeared as 'Santa Cruz'. El Paso, the focus for the middle section of the film, was designed and built in grand style by Carlo Simi (who was also the film's costumier) in the desert near Tabernas, Almeria. The whitewashed Spanish village of Los Albaricoques (named 'The Apricots', after its fruit trees) was Agua Caliente, the isolated pueblo which is the setting for the film's last 45 minutes. The ruined, roofless Church of Santa Maria at Turillas was used for Indio's hideout when he breaks out of prison. Las Palmeras, where Manco rendezvous with Indio after the robbery, was El Oasis, a patch of desert with clumps of palm trees, which had been planted during *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). El Paso still stands in Spain. Now called 'Mini Hollywood', it attracts sunburnt tourists to its 'Wild West' show re-enactments.

The script, which Eastwood and Van Cleef pruned, was tighter than *Fistful* and Leone's visual style began to flourish. This is illustrated by Manco's first appearance in the film. Colonel Mortimer asks the Tucumcari sheriff if he knows the whereabouts of outlaw Red 'Baby' Cavanagh. The lawman answers that a stranger stopped by, also asking after Red. 'I've never seen him before', says the sheriff of the stranger, 'His name is Manco'. Leone cuts to a close-up of Eastwood's trademark rattlesnake gripped pistol, fringed poncho and a leather gauntlet he wears on his gun hand (accompanied by a crash of thunder on the soundtrack), as Eastwood stalks past the camera into White Rocks in the lashing rain. When Eastwood reaches the saloon, he flicks back his poncho, takes a match from his breast pocket and lights a cheroot, as he slowly raises his head – his face has been obscured by the brim of his hat – and reveals his face for the first time (as a thunderclap crashes on the soundtrack). In *For a Few*, Eastwood's hero is more humorous, he even smiles occasionally, and has a great final punchline. As he loads the bandits' corpses into a cart to take back to El Paso, his bounty haul calculations fall short of expectations and he realises he's one villain short. At that moment Manco spins around and shoots outlaw Groggy, who is about to plug him in the back. At the sound of gunfire the colonel shouts, 'Any trouble boy?'; 'No old man', answers Manco, 'Thought I was having trouble with my adding – it's all right now'.

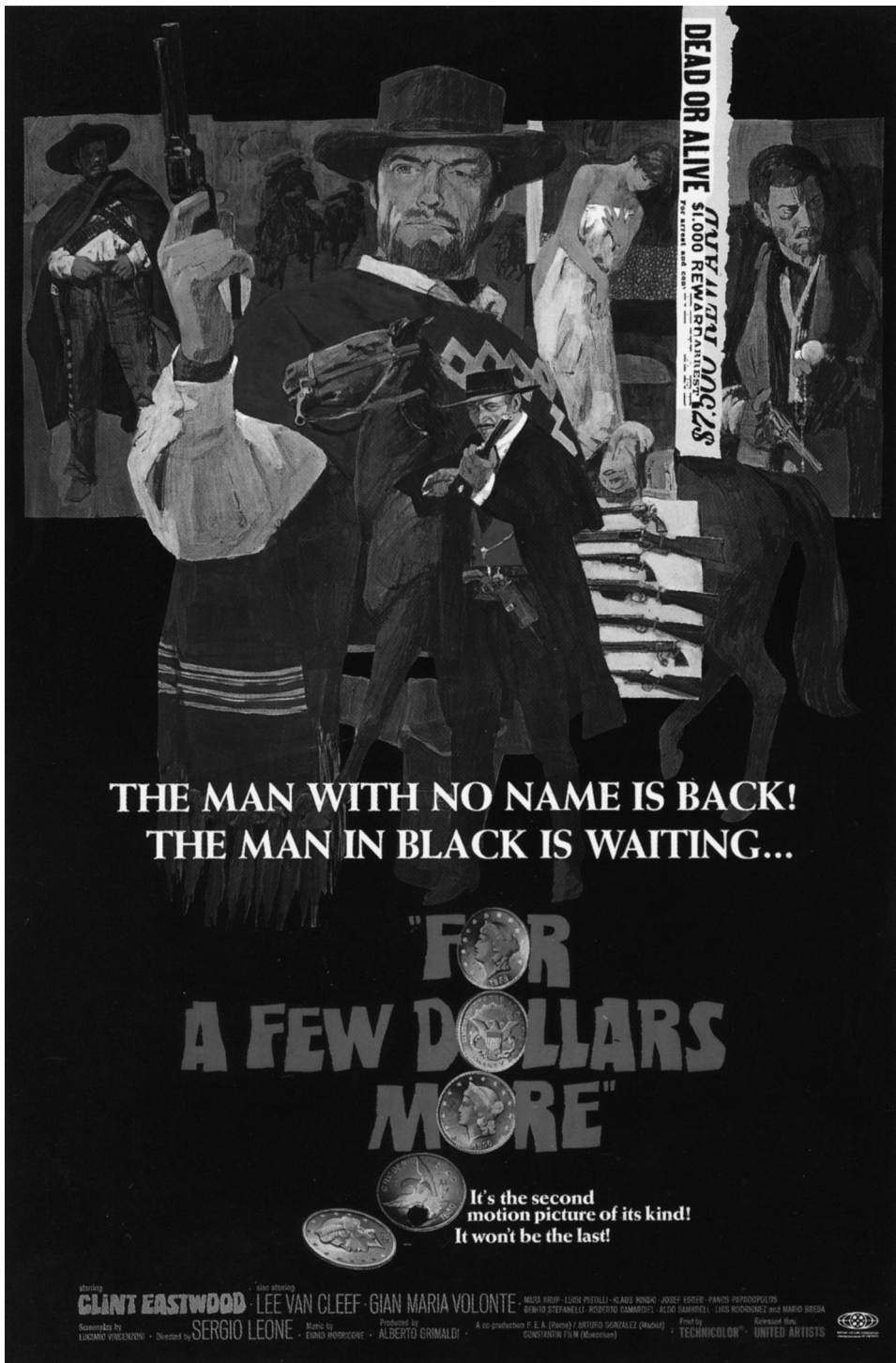
It is Van Cleef's Colonel Mortimer, the Bible-reading 'Reverend', and his tracking of Indio, that drives the film. His vendetta is symbolised by the pair of gold pocket watches (a larger male and smaller female version of the design) in a heart-shaped box. Mortimer's revenge ends the film satisfyingly, with the bandito and 'Il Colonnello' facing each other in a broken ring, marked by a low, crumbling wall and quarried stones – a dusty circle of destiny. Manco, armed with Indio's Volcanic calibre .38 carbine, referees this final confrontation, with the moment the two men draw decided by the carillon of Mortimer's watch – the chiming countdown to life and death.

Ennio Morricone once again provided the distinctive score, with a main theme deploying Jew's harp, flute, whistling, chorus and electric guitars – a 'riding theme' powered along by pounding hoofbeat drums. For duels Morricone created 'La Resa Dei Conti' ('The Settling of Accounts', also called 'Sixty Seconds to What?' or 'Paying off Scores'), with its tinkling watch melody, reverberating Flamenco guitar, blasts of church organ and trumpet: a vocal version was recorded by Maurizio Graf entitled 'An Eye for an Eye' but wasn't used in the film. Eerie feedback scores Indio's gang casing the adobe bank in 'The Watcher Watched', while the side-drums, piano, brass and tolling bell of 'Il Colpo' ('The Raid') accompany them emptying the safe. The delicate guitar and oboe of 'Vice of Killing' bursts into life with galloping snare drums and a heavenly, wordless vocal, as Indio's band speed across the desert with their loot-laden wagon, and as Manco rides alone into unwelcoming Agua Caliente. 'Goodbye Colonel' (sometimes billed as 'Addio Colonnello' or 'Bye Bye Colonel'), with lyrical oboe, strings, carillon and chorus, scored Mortimer's slow ride into the sunset.

For a Few Dollars More was released in Italy as *Per Qualche Dollaro in Piu* in December 1965, to massive and influential success: there was even a parody of the film called *For a Few Dollars Less* (1966). *For a Few Dollars More* was released in the US rated 'M' (later 'R') four months after *Fistful*, to even greater success, initially taking \$5 million. Posters featuring Eastwood ('The Man With No Name Is Back') and Van Cleef ('The Man In Black Is Waiting') warned, 'As if one wasn't enough... as if death needed a double. It's the second motion picture of its kind! It won't be the last'. The UK trailer introduced Volonte and Eastwood as 'the men who excited you so in *For a Fistful of Dollars*'. The superior US trailer, one of Eastwood's best promos, touted: 'Clint Eastwood is The Man with No Name... Lee Van Cleef is Waiting'. The UK print cut violence, garnering an 'X' certificate, removing, among others, the final explanatory flashback depicting Mortimer's sister's suicide. Even Indio's mad cackling laugh was shortened for US/UK prints, so demonic was his villainy. Critically reviled at the time, *For a Few Dollars More* is one of the most financially profitable Italian westerns ever made, with Eastwood now dubbed 'Il Cigarillo' by his Italian fans.

***The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966)**

Eastwood's next project with Leone, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, would today be called a 'threequel', although in chronological relation to the first two films it's a prequel. In early 1862, Confederate forces led by General Sibley invaded New Mexico from Texas. Amid the confusion, as the war engulfs the Rio Grande, three men have something else on their minds: hired gun Angel Eyes (Lee Van Cleef), Mexican outlaw Tuco Ramirez (Eli Wallach) and his partner, shifty drifter Blondy (Eastwood), are searching for a cashbox containing \$200,000 in gold coin buried in a grave marked 'Arch Stanton' in Sad Hill. It is missing following a Union surprise attack on a Confederate payroll wagon destined for the 3rd Cavalry. In Sad Hill, the trio confront each other: Blondy kills Angel Eyes and splits the cash with Tuco, leaving his partner stranded in the middle of nowhere with his hands bound, but \$100,000 richer.



1.2 'The Man With No Name is Back!': original poster for the 1967 US release of Sergio Leone's *For a Few Dollars More* (1965). Author's collection.

One scene in *For a Few Dollars More* hints at the central three-way deception of *The Good*. Following the El Paso bank raid, Mortimer and Manco agree to convince Indio to head north, so they can ambush him in Rio Bravo Canyon, but duplicitous Manco suggests to Indio they head south, to the Mexican border. Indio, equally suspicious, rides east, to Agua Caliente, but miraculously Mortimer out-guesses them and arrives there first, telling Manco: 'I just reasoned it out'. The Colonel knew that Manco would ignore their plan and that Indio would second-guess them – 'Since El Paso's out of the question, well here I am'. This elaborate web of trickery and double-cross became the skeletal plot of Leone's third western.

The epic story was written by Leone and Luciano Vincenzoni. Sergio Donati and Age-Scarpelli also worked on the screenplay, which was then translated into English by Mickey Knox. Again working with producer Albert Grimaldi of PEA, Leone had a budget of \$1.2 million. This time Eastwood drove a hard bargain: for his role as Blondy 'The Good', he received a quarter of a million dollars (more than the amount the film's cashbox contains), noting, 'I'm probably the highest-paid American actor who ever worked in Italian pictures. Only Mastroianni gets more in Italy. For the first time in my life, I can pick the parts I want to play'. Lee Van Cleef returned to villainy, with his role as Angel Eyes 'The Bad'. Originally called Banjo in the script, then Sentenza during shooting, his name became Angel Eyes during the English dubbing. Eli Wallach, an outlaw in *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) and *How the West Was Won* (1962), played Tuco 'The Ugly'. The remainder of the cast was a rogue's gallery of actors – good, bad and ugly – to play the assorted ruffians and trail trash the heroes encounter. Italian Aldo Giuffrè played drunken Unionist captain Clinton who dreams of blowing to smithereens a bridge he's been ordered to take intact. Antonio Molino Rojo portrayed a prison camp commandant with a gangrenous leg, similarly disillusioned with the Union cause. Luigi Pistilli played Tuco's brother, Brother Pablo, a monk tending wounded soldiers at his San Antonio Mission. Mario Brega appeared as brutal Unionist corporal Wallace, at his happiest beating seven shades of grey out of Confederate prisoners of war. Canadian Al Mulock played a one-armed bounty hunter who traps Tuco in a bubble bath but crows too long: 'If you have to shoot – shoot, don't talk', Tuco tells his corpse.

Filming took place between May and July of 1966. That Spanish spring and summer was perfect weather, with solid-blue skies and smoky cloud formations. Interiors were filmed at Elios Studios. Elios' western set was also where the town of Mesilla was filmed, for Tuco's first escape from hanging. His second escape, in Valverde, was shot at the 'El Paso' set in Almeria. The same set was also used for the scene where Tuco robs a gunsmith, when Angel Eyes questions a prostitute in Santa Ana, and when Sibley's Confederate column retreats through Santa Fe. Other New Mexican locations – the Sierra Magdalena and the Sangre De Cristo ('Blood of Christ') Mountains, and white-washed dusty pueblos, ghost towns and farms – were filmed in Almeria. The notorious 90-mile desert, the Jornada Del Muerto (the 'Day's Journey of the Dead Man'), where Tuco tortures blistered Blondy, was filmed at Cabo De Gata. The Union railway depot



1.3 'Sorry Shorty': Tuco the Ugly gets the drop on Blondy in the desert; Clint Eastwood in the Spanish dunes for *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966). Author's collection.

was La Calahorra Station (on the Almeria-Guadix line) and the San Antonio Mission was Cortijo De Los Frailes ('House of the Brothers'); the mission's interior was filmed at the Monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza, north of Madrid. Battle-torn Peralta was filmed at Colmenar Viejo's western set near Madrid. The scene where Blondy and Tuco first meet was lensed at rocky Manzanares El Real, further north. Most of the Civil War scenes were shot between Madrid and Burgos, in Castilla-León. The entrenched battle between the blue and the grey raged at Covarrubias, on the River Arlanza. Betterville prison camp was built at Carazo and Sad Hill's amphitheatre of the dead, ringed with concentric circles of tombs, was also south of the Arlanza, at Contreras. All three locations were less than 20 kilometres apart, with the prison camp location actually just over the mesa behind Angel Eyes during the final showdown.

Leone's anti-heroic depiction of the American Civil War filled his towns with refugees and troops, while the military hospitals are packed with the bloodied wounded. Outside Valverde's 'Ballroom Music Hall', Angel Eyes questions a Confederate cavalryman who has lost both his legs, calling him a 'Half Soldier'. Betterville Prison Camp had its origins in terrible Federal stockades such as Camp Douglas, Chicago, which lost almost 10 percent of its 3,880 inmates in a single month to dreadful conditions and disease. The film's battle scenes deployed hundreds of extras (played by Spanish soldiers in Civil War period costume) and heavy-duty artillery, including Gatling Guns, Parrott Guns and mortars. The entrenched defence works at Langstone Bridge were also based on archive photos, depicting tiered wicker and sandbagged breastworks, rifle pits, bomb-proof shelters, gun emplacements and the spiky criss-crossed log defences (an anti-cavalry barricade known as 'chevaux-de-frise'). Costume

designer Carlo Simi included such details as the Confederate soldiers wearing colour-coded kepis (caps), collars and cuffs, denoting their branch of service: yellow for cavalry, blue for infantry and red for artillery. Leone loved the film's 'big scope'; 'And I liked it, I must say', remembered Eastwood, 'Especially coming from television where you didn't have the opportunity to do that'. As Leone boasted, 'This picture is more accurate than any American western'.

Eastwood's drifting nowhere man is a nomadic con man christened 'Blondy' by Tuco. The Italian print dubs him 'Biondo' (after Eastwood's fair complexion) while the film's novelisation has Mexican Tuco calling him 'Whitey'. His business partnership with Tuco – where he turns the wanted outlaw over to the law and then saves him by shooting through the hanging rope during the execution – provides much humour, as neither trusts the other. Blondy tires of their partnership, reasoning that Tuco will never be worth more than \$3,000: 'There's really not too much future with a sawn-off runt like you'. Eventually he cuts loose of Tuco in the desert, 70 miles from Valverde: 'I'll keep the money and you can have the rope'.

In his third Leone outing, Eastwood's performance is confident and effortless. He deploys his full range of 'Man with No Name' mannerisms: the double takes, the squint, mouthing the cigar, the deadpan asides, the long silences and the empty half-smile. Blondy uses a Colt Navy pistol, again fitted with snake grips, and a Henry repeating rifle with a telescopic sight. This time there is more humility and humanity to Eastwood's gunman. Blondy offers a dying Confederate artilleryman a last drag on his cigar. Before Blondy detonates Langstone Bridge, he tells a badly wounded Union officer, 'Take a slug of this capt'n ... keep your ears open'. In one unusual scene, Blondy bides his time in war-torn Peralta by playing with a kitten in his hat. Such compassion, almost tenderness, would be rare in Eastwood's westerns, even in mature works such as *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and *Unforgiven*. During the Battle of Langstone Bridge, as the Union and Confederate forces suicidally attack the bridge under heavy artillery fire, he watches and mutters, 'I've never seen so many men wasted so badly'. But Blondy loots his trademark poncho from the dead Confederate artilleryman and becomes 'The Man with No Name' for the final duel.

Morricone's most famous composition, the film's title music, is cut to an equally memorable title sequence, with colourful tinted stills from the film, explosions and dust. The main theme, a coyote-howling, guitar-twanging, bugle charge, is one of the most famous western themes of all time – its 'Ay-ey-ay-ey-ahhh!' answered 'Wah-wah-wah!' instantly recognisable. Elsewhere, mournful tunes – 'The Fort', 'Marcetta', 'March without Hope' and the ballad 'The Soldier's Story' – score the Civil War devastation. The epic 'The Desert' accompanies Blondy's bubbled agony in the dunes and in 'Ecstasy of Gold', the rolling piano and Edda Dell'Orso's soprano solo soar as Tuco frantically scours Sad Hill. With epic battles and scores of extras, it is ironic that the finale involves only the three antagonists competing for the prize – the contents of the grave marked 'Unknown', the tomb with no name, next to Arch Stanton's, which contains a cashbox. It is one of the most memorable endings to a western and a fitting climax to the 'Dollars' trilogy, as the Good, the Bad and the Ugly shoot it out in

the epicentre of the vast graveyard, with Morricone's music 'Il Triello' ('The Trio') thundering on the soundtrack.

For its US release, United Artists considered several different titles for the film – *The Good, the Ugly, the Bad* (a literal translation of the original Italian title, *Il Buono, Il Brutto, Il Cattivo*), *River of Dollars* (a translation of *Un Fiume Di Dollari*, the Italian title of a spaghetti western released in the US by UA as *The Hills Run Red*) and even *The Man With No Name* – before settling on *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Cynical posters announced: 'For Three Men the Civil War Wasn't Hell... It was Practice' and 'This time the jackpot's a cool \$200,000'. In equal parts impressive and incompetent, the eventful, epic trailer intoned, 'The Good, the Bad, the Ugly... the blue, the grey, the Civil War... the questions, the answers, the showdown... the reason? The gold!' The US trailer misidentified Tuco as 'The Bad' and Angel Eyes as 'The Ugly', which saddled Van Cleef with the epithet 'Mr Ugly' for his subsequent spaghetti westerns.

Critics were divided on the merits of Leone's third western. On 25 January 1968, the *New York Times*, who called it '*The Burn, the Gouge and the Mangle* (the screen name is simply inappropriate)', said that it 'must be the most expensive, pious and repellent movie in the history of its peculiar genre'. *Variety* noted, 'A curious amalgam of the visually striking, the dramatically feeble and the offensively sadistic'. But most critics agreed that Leone was a talented director with an eye for detail and action. Next to Wallach, Eastwood and Van Cleef were deemed 'expressionless characters with poker faces' as animated as 'a slab of boot leather'. It ran 161 minutes in the US (rated 'M', later 'R'); in the UK, it was cut to 148 minutes (rated 'X'). The original Italian version, which premiered over Christmas 1966, was 171 minutes long and included several extra scenes. In 2003, Eastwood and Wallach, plus Simon Prescott, a Van Cleef voice impersonator (Van Cleef died in 1989), dubbed the missing Italian scenes into English, but in this version the gunshots, cannon fire, explosions and sound effects were altered. The Italian version, which runs 169 minutes on video and has correct sound effects, is the definitive version of the film, while the best English language version runs 156 minutes, still rated '18' on DVD.

A paperback tie-in of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* written by Joe Millard was published in 1967. In this version, Tuco doesn't take part in the final duel and Angel Eyes (or Sentenza, as he's known in the book) carries a custom-made pistol with a 14-inch barrel, like Colonel Mortimer. A cover version of Morricone's theme, rearranged and conducted by Hugo Montenegro, was released by RCA Victor on both sides of the Atlantic in 1968 – backed by 'There's Got to Be a Better Way' from *Bandolero!* (1968) in the UK and 'March without Hope' in the US. It went to number one in the UK in November 1968 and peaked at number two in the US. Its success contributed to the film's massive grosses – in the US alone it took over \$6 million, putting it inside the 10 most successful westerns of the sixties.

In Italy 'new releases' *El Maladetto Gringo*, *Il Magnifico Straniero* and *El Gringhero* welded together *Rawhide* episodes ('Incident of the Running Man' and 'The Backshooter'), until an injunction gunned them down. The 'Dollars' films' success in Italy led to the 'spaghetti western' craze, which produced hundreds of films

in the next ten years and revitalised, some would say saved, the Italian film industry. Following *The Good*, Eastwood and Leone didn't see each other for years, as their careers diverged on different projects – Eastwood was offered a guest star role in Leone's next film, *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), as one of the killers waiting for Charles Bronson in the film's opening scene, but he declined. When Leone was in the US in the early eighties making *Once Upon a Time in America*, Eastwood visited him at his hotel. 'I've often been asked if I could make another film with him', said Leone, 'I always refuse. It is impossible'. They could never have surpassed the Dollars trilogy, especially *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, their masterpiece.

***Hang 'Em High* (1968)**

Following his success as the 'Man with No Name', Eastwood said 'Arrivederci Roma' and returned to the US, had a shave and gained a name, as Jed Cooper in *Hang 'Em High*, which straddled the badlands between spaghetti and Hollywood westerns. Eastwood was initially approached to star in the Hollywood western *Mackenna's Gold* (1968), but he turned it down and Gregory Peck eventually took the treasure-hunting role – an adventurer seeking fabled Apache gold in the Canyon Del'Oro. Shot partly in Monument Valley, its plot bore echoes of *The Good* and even featured Eli Wallach in a supporting role.

Though Eastwood had noted during the making of *The Good* that he could pick the parts he wanted to play, on his return to the US he capitalised on the success of the 'Dollars' films by typecasting himself as a Leonesque western hero. With his 'Dollars' earnings and a \$119,000 *Rawhide* payoff, Eastwood formed his own production company, Malpaso (named after Malpaso Creek on his land is Monterey), with a view to having a personal stake in his films: this way he would be able to control his own career and the projects he participated in. All of his subsequent westerns were made with Malpaso as co-producer. In collaboration with Leonard Freeman Productions, Malpaso co-produced and financed *Hang 'Em High*, which was released through United Artists. Freeman wrote the script with Mel Goldberg, and Ted Post, who had worked with Eastwood on *Rawhide*, directed the film.

Cooper, an ex-lawman from St Louis, is herding his recently bought cattle through Oklahoma, when he is accused by a posse of stealing the herd from Johansen, a rancher who has since been murdered. The men, led by their employer Captain Wilson (Ed Begley), are Miller, Reno, Stone, Jenkins, Maddow, Tommy, Loomis and Charlie Blackfoot. They lynch Cooper and leave him for dead, but Marshall Dave Bliss (Ben Johnson) finds Cooper, revives him and takes him to Fort Grant, where 'Hangin' Judge Fenton' (Pat Hingle) presides. Acquitted and left with a nasty scar around his neck (which he conceals with a neckerchief), Cooper is convinced by Fenton to become a deputy marshal, which will enable him to take revenge on the men he seeks legally. While on a routine jail pickup, Cooper kills Reno. Then Jenkins turns himself in at Fort Grant and Cooper discovers that the rest of the lynch party are in the town of Red Creek. Cooper arrests Stone, Red Creek's blacksmith, and tracks down Miller, but Wilson, Loomis and

Tommy try to kill Cooper during a public hanging at Fort Grant. Cooper is nursed back to health by widow Rachel Warren (Inger Stevens), who is searching for the men who raped her and killed her husband. On his recovery, Cooper rides out to Wilson's 'Big W' ranch and kills Loomis and Tommy, before discovering that Wilson has hanged himself high, committing suicide. Not convinced that the law always hangs the right people, Cooper negotiates amnesty for Jenkins, who was only a bystander, before riding out after the remaining killers, Maddow and Charlie.



1.4 Clint Eastwood, in costume as Jed Cooper, on set with director Ted Post during the making of their 1968 revenge western, *Hang 'Em High*. Author's collection.

Commencing in June 1967, *Hang 'Em High* had a budget of \$1.6 million, of which Eastwood received \$400,000, plus 25 percent of the box office. It was filmed on location near Las Cruces in New Mexico – in the Organ Mountains (the posse's pursuit of Miller), the spectacular White Sands dunes (Cooper's trek with three rustlers) and beside the Rio Grande River (Cooper's lynching). Some location footage was shot at the Albertson Ranch in Conejo Valley, California (for Jed and Rachel's picnic). Fort Grant's interiors and exteriors were shot on a town set at Lot Three in MGM Studios.

Hang 'Em High has a rich western cast, blending old hands with up-and-coming talent. The younger cast members included Dennis Hopper and Bruce Dern, two counterculture actors who would go on to make their names in biker movies. Dern honed his screen persona in a series of western roles as a toothy maladjust. Hopper has a startling two-minute cameo as 'The Prophet', a mad zealot ('He's plumb loco') wearing a claw necklace and sackcloth rags, who dies theatrically when shot by sheriff Ben Johnson. Johnson himself had appeared in many John Ford westerns and would enjoy a renaissance in the sixties working for Sam Peckinpah, as would L.Q. Jones, cast here as taggle-haired Loomis. Reliable supporting character actors included Charles McGraw as the sheriff with a 'cardboard jail' and a permanently bad back, Pat Hingle as almighty Judge Fenton and Ed Begley (from *12 Angry Men*) as bad guy Captain Wilson. Eastwood's onscreen lovers were blonde Swedish beauty Inger Stevens as storekeeper Rachel and brassy redhead Arlene Golonka as Jennifer, a prostitute. Roxanne Tunis, Eastwood's lover from *Rawhide* days, appeared briefly as a prostitute in a blue dress amongst the crowd attending a public hanging.

Judge Adam Fenton and the mass hangings at Fort Grant are based on real-life 'Hanging Judge' Isaac Charles Parker and his courthouse on the edge of Indian Territory in Arkansas, which operated from 1870 to 1891. Parker's gallows could accommodate 12, but the most that was carried out simultaneously was six, as depicted in *Hang 'Em High*. Homer Croy's 1952 biography of the judge was called *He Hanged Them High*. Parker's trusted, notorious lord high executioner was George Maledon, photographs of whom show he had all the charm of a reanimated cadaver. James Westerfield, who played a tobacco-chewing criminal hanged by Fenton in *Hang 'Em High*, actually played Parker in the opening Fort Smith scenes of John Wayne's *True Grit* (1969). *Hang 'Em High* is set in 1889, towards the end of Parker's period, and accurately depicts Parker's macabre event hangings, with huge crowds enjoying the hymn singing and the carnivalesque public holiday atmosphere. This scene at MGM was the largest crowd to be filmed in Hollywood since *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

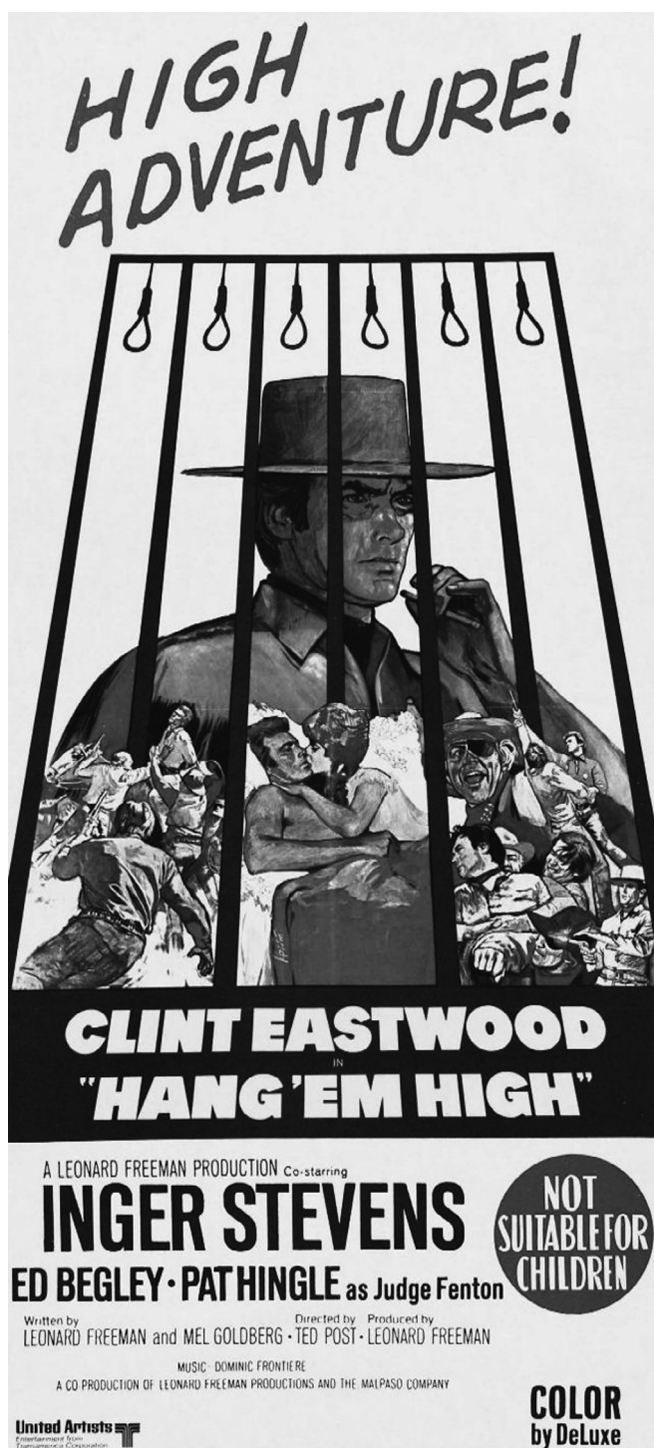
From its opening sequence, where Eastwood appears in cowboy chaps, herding cattle across the Rio Grande, *Hang 'Em High* more closely resembles a TV western than Leone's films, its excessive, bloody moments of violence excepted. Though Eastwood affects a cigar and wears his trademark gunbelt and boots, Jedediah Cooper is not 'The Man with No Name'. *Hang* provides its black-clad deputy marshal with legal justification for his revenge killings. As Fenton tells him, 'You used the law and a badge to heal that scar on your neck'. The *New York Times* noted that the film at least 'had a point, unlike the previous sadomasochistic exercises on foreign prairies

where the grizzled Mr Eastwood stalked around in a filthy serape, holster-deep in corpses'. The story bears a passing resemblance to *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943), one of Eastwood's favourite films, which cast Henry Fonda as a drifter enlisted in a posse that lynches three blameless men for murder. The name Jed Cooper references Hollywood westerns, recalling *High Noon*'s Gary Cooper. In 1966, Vittorio De Sica had introduced Eastwood to the French press during a promotional appearance for *For a Few Dollars More* as 'the new Gary Cooper'. *Hang 'Em High*, the only period western where Eastwood plays a straightforward lawman role, sees the star attempt to don Cooper's mantle onscreen.

Hang 'Em High is a Hollywood attempt at a spaghetti western, but the camera-work is overly lit and devoid of style, the MGM town set looks rather newly built and the film's costumes too clean. Even Dominic Frontiere's score attempts to replicate Morricone's 'Dollars' cues. In fact, when Hugo Montenegro and his Orchestra and Chorus recorded 'Music for the Man with No Name', a tribute album to the 'Dollars' trilogy in 1967, the *Hang 'Em High* theme was tacked on to it. *Variety* famously called the film 'a poor American-made imitation of a poor Italian-made imitation of an American-made western'. But the script is too verbose, especially in Judge Fenton's monologues detailing capital punishment, his moral abhorrence at revenge and the fact that, for some judged men, the only arbiter between Fenton and God is a length of rope. These scenes do give an early insight into the way subsequent Eastwood characters, in particular Harry Callahan, would argue at length with City Hall officialdom. Eastwood is at his best when bluntly confronting the judge's reasoning. When told to go to Hell, Cooper answers, 'I've already been there judge'.

The lynch mob deals its justice in uncompromising fashion, which led to the bloodier, boot-twitching shots of Eastwood being cut for TV screenings. Cooper is dragged across the Rio Grande by the neck, beaten and strung up. When Bliss finds Cooper he is near to death and the bumpy journey to Fort Grant in the mule-drawn tumbleweed prison wagon, essentially an iron cage on wheels, is suitably arduous, with Eastwood at his most dishevelled. Such a vehicle had also been the focus of the first ever episode of *Rawhide*, 'Incident of the Tumbleweed Wagon'. When, in unexpected subplot padding, Cooper is side-tracked into leading a posse pursuing three rustlers it emerges that one of them is lynch mob member Miller. But when the posse deserts him, Cooper must bring the trio in alone. 'You ain't ever gonna get me alive to Fort Grant, boy', sneers Miller, looking at the three-to-one odds. 'Then I'll get you there dead, boy', replies Cooper, through gritted teeth. The thirsty trek across White Sands culminates in a lengthy fistfight between Cooper and Miller, during which Miller's arm is savagely broken by Cooper. Already Eastwood's screen heroes will go to any lengths to see justice done.

Hang 'Em High was released in the US in August 1968, rated 'M'. Posters depicted cigar-smoking Eastwood and the six-man gallows, with the tagline: 'They made two mistakes – they hanged the wrong man and they didn't finish the job', a sensational variation of the subtle moral message of *The Ox-Bow Incident*. It made \$6.7 million in



1.5 Original advertising for United Artists' release of *Hang 'Em High* featuring Clint Eastwood, his trademark cigar and the six-man Fort Grant scaffold; Australian daybill, courtesy Ian Counce Collection.

the US, eventually garnering \$11 million. The *New York Post* praised Eastwood: 'His good-looking tranquillity in the midst of life and death issues may really be nothing but the limitation of a strong, silent hero, but it looks good on him'. In the UK, rated 'X' following some cuts, the *Daily Express* joked, 'Eastwood has made his first talking picture', while *Films and Filming* noted that the movie 'has an air of sincere earnestness which the Italian films carefully invert, and so it is far harder to accept its graphic depiction of violence'. Most agreed that this was better than his three spaghetti westerns, a consensus that hasn't stood the test of time.

***Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970)**

Two Mules for Sister Sara, Eastwood's second film with director Don Siegel following their collaboration on *Coogan's Bluff* (1968), was the closest that an Eastwood film came to resurrecting 'The Man with No Name'. The story was originally written by Budd Boetticher with Robert Mitchum in mind; Boetticher was a director already noted for *The Tall T* (1957), *Ride Lonesome* (1959) and *Comanche Station* (1960). But the script was transformed by Albert Maltz into something that closely resembled a Leone western, made on a \$4 million budget and shot on location in Mexico in 65 days with a predominantly Mexican crew. Ennio Morricone even supplied the score.

Elizabeth Taylor had shown Eastwood the *Two Mules* script during the making of *Where Eagles Dare* in London in 1969. Taylor planned to star as nun Sister Sara, with the production lensed in Spain. But Taylor bowed out and Shirley MacLaine was cast instead as feisty Sara. Eastwood received second-billing as Hogan (named Lucy in Boetticher's story); in Italy, Eastwood received top-billing in the retitled version *Gli Avvoltoi hanno Fame* ('The Vultures Are Hungry'). Following the American Civil War, Hogan is drifting south through Mexico towards Chihuahua to meet up with Juarista revolutionaries fighting the French. On the way, he saves Sara from three drunken bandits and she tags along with him and reveals that she's wanted by the French for collecting funds for the revolutionaries. Mercenary Hogan plans to dynamite the French Treasury at Chihuahua, which has a heavily armed garrison, for a fortune in gold and agrees to take Sara with him. Sara knows that the garrison will be drunk on 14 July, celebrating Bastille Day. At the railway depot at San Tevo, they discover an armaments train is due to reinforce the French. Although Hogan is wounded by an arrow in his shoulder during a Yaqui Indian ambush, he and Sara manage to blow up a trestle bridge with dynamite, obliterating the train. They contact Juaristas in the El Gato Negro cantina in Santa Maria and hook up with Colonel Beltran (Manolo Fabregas) and his rebel forces in the hills. But the train attack has alerted the garrison and on the 14th no one is drunk. During a night-time assault on the stronghold, orchestrated through a tunnel from the former Bishop's residence, now a 'cathouse' (whose employees seem to know Sara very well), the Juaristas and Hogan overrun the French and take the treasury.

The action-packed story is set during the French Intervention (1862–67), also the locale for *Vera Cruz* (1954), *Major Dundee* (1965), *The Undefeated* (1969) and

Adios Sabata (1970), though the weaponry on display, including Colt Peacemakers and Winchesters, is too early for the period. Siegel placed Eastwood's gunslinger in the middle of some pyrotechnic action sequences. Hogan demolishes a bridge and fights for 'the cause', participating in the Juarista assault on Chihuahua's 200-strong garrison and artillery. Hogan is in the thick of the action, lighting sticks of dynamite with his cigar, commandeering a Gatling gun and surviving a French bayonet-charge. Trailers called Eastwood a 'one-man suicide squad' and 'Mister Action himself... a hero for hire'. The blown up supply train and trestle bridge were created, highly convincingly, in miniature by the Mexican special effects crew, while the rebels' attack on Chihuahua commenced with an explosive piñata (usually filled with sweets and treats). Buddy Van Horn, Eastwood's regular stunt double from *Coogan's Bluff* (1968) onwards, supervised the finale's elaborate stunts. Unsurprisingly, Boetticher, who'd conceived the project as a realistic, low-key story, wasn't very impressed with the spaghetti western-style results, calling it 'another Eastwood thing'.

The film's main point of interest is the attempt to cast Eastwood's lonesome 'Man with No Name' opposite a strong female lead – and they don't come much stronger than Shirley MacLaine. A rewrite re-nationalised her from Mexican to Anglo, as MacLaine is fair-skinned and redheaded. The audience knows Sara isn't a nun almost immediately. On the trail she exhibits several bad habits behind Hogan's back: swigging whiskey, swearing and smoking cigar dog-ends. The *Hollywood Reporter* cruelly commented on the obvious plot ending: 'The only one who was surprised when [Sara] became a hooker was Clint Eastwood'. For the demolition of the bridge scene, wounded Hogan gets drunk and slurs a bawdy ballad, while Sara removes the Yaqui arrow from his shoulder. Eastwood maintained that this was the best scene he'd ever played. But *Time* wrote of his performance that he 'looks grizzled, stares into the sun and sneers, but anything more demanding seems beyond his grasp'. Throughout their journey Eastwood rides a horse, while Sara wobbles along behind on a mule (a horse-donkey hybrid) and later a burro (a thoroughbred donkey); MacLaine had trouble staying on the mule, so the burro was written into the story. The film's running joke is that Hogan is as stubborn as her mule (she christens him 'Mr Mule') and thinks he's in control, while Sara craftily always gets her own way. But according to Boetticher, Martin Rackin, the film's producer, admitted in interviews of not knowing 'who the second mule was'.

Two Mules for Sister Sara is one of Eastwood's best post-Leone westerns. The comedy is well played by the two co-stars and Gabriel Figueroa's Panavision photography of a crumbling, unforgiving Mexico ensured it looked splendid. The film was shot around Cuautla and Jantetelco in Morelos from February 1969. The fort and the surrounding settlement of Chihuahua were constructed from scratch in six months. The ruins at Pantitlan and Cauixtla also appeared in the film. *Two Mules* has a special place in Eastwood's post-Leone western filmography as it boasts a Morricone score – not an imitation of a Morricone score, as most of his other non-Italian westerns did – as part of the Clint Eastwood-spaghetti western 'brand'. The



1.6 Wounded Hogan uses Sister Sara as a tripod for target practice; Clint Eastwood and Shirley MacLaine on location in Mexico for *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970). Author's collection.

main theme, as Eastwood rides out of a burnished orange Mexican dawn, crossing the plains and fording a river, opens the film in fine style. Morricone orchestrates flute trills, honking ‘mule brays’ and angelic incantations (intoning ‘Lead Us Not into Temptation’ sung in Italian), backed by a very unusual off-kilter guitar and strings arrangement. This opening scene was actually shot in two weeks by second unit director Joe Cavalier, with Eastwood and a menagerie of desert and mountain wildlife, including an owl, fish, jackrabbits, snakes, a cougar and a tarantula. Hogan’s horse crushes the spider with one of its hooves, the second time Eastwood had exterminated an arachnid onscreen. Morricone also deployed delicate Spanish guitars on the moving ‘A Time for Miracles’, echoing strings and juddering Flamenco guitars on ‘La Cueva’ (‘The Cave’ – used for the trek to Beltran’s mountain HQ); there’s even a Mariachi Deguello for the firing squad scene at San Tevo. *Two Mules’s* great score, recorded in Rome by Morricone and his Italian orchestra, is one of the film’s plusses.

There are also several typically spaghetti western moments, with Sara’s rescue the best example. Hogan shoots two of her attackers, but the third (Armando Silvestre) takes her hostage. Hogan lights a stick of dynamite and tosses it from cover behind a rock. It lands at the bandit’s feet and he panics and runs, whereupon Hogan coolly shoots him in the back. Hogan saunters down, cuts the fuse and then proceeds to loot the corpses. This is comic book western action, stylised and implausible, and Maltz’s script strives for pseudo-religious significance. Sara’s beliefs dictate that the Lord will provide on her journey. Hogan indicates to the corpses: ‘Three more like them?’, ‘He also provided you’, she smiles. Hogan looks just like Leone’s hero, in waistcoat, hat and neckerchief – he even dons a poncho disguise to spy on the Chihuahua garrison. But it is Sara who wins their battle of wits and in the final scene, Hogan sullenly leads



1.7 ‘Sierra Torride’: Spanish poster for *Two Mules for Sister Sara* retitles the film *Torrid Sierra*. Poster courtesy Ian Caunce Collection.

his packhorse, now loaded with hat boxes and luggage, into the desert, followed by Sara in a gaudy, low-cut red dress, hat and feathers, under a parasol and still riding her mule. Like Eastwood's bounty hunters, Sara has got her man.

In the US, the film was released on 16 June 1970, rated 'M' (later re-rated 'PG') and took \$5 million. It was even more successful worldwide; in the UK, it was distributed by Rank, rated 'A'. Posters concentrated on Eastwood's stranger and the Sergio Leone connection, with the tagline: 'The deadliest man alive faces a whole army with 2 guns and a fistful of dynamite!' *Women's Wear Daily* thought of Siegel's film, 'Eastwood acts with greater naturalness than he has in the past', *Variety* said that the stars 'don't generate any chemistry', while the *New York Times* praised their efforts: 'I'm not sure it's a great movie, but it is very good and it stays and grows in the mind the way only movies of exciting narrative intelligence do'. Whatever the critics' opinions, for once they couldn't argue that Eastwood's acting was second to none.

Joe Kidd (1972)

Following *Dirty Harry* (1971), his biggest box office hit to date, Eastwood's next western was *Joe Kidd* – with him playing the title role. It was directed by John Sturges, who had made several great westerns, including *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) and *Hour of the Gun* (1967). *Joe Kidd* didn't join that illustrious list.

The film opens with Kidd, an ex-bounty hunter and tracker, languishing in the Sinola jail for poaching on reservation land, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Offered a choice between a \$10 fine and 10 days in jail, he has taken the latter but is put to work with a broom – literally cleaning up the town. A group of Mexican farmers led by sheepherder Luis Chama (John Saxon) arrives in Sinola. They have been locked in a two-year legal battle with gringo land barons and before escaping proceeds to burn the land deeds at the County Court House. Sheriff Bob Mitchell (Gregory Walcott) leads a posse in pursuit but fails to catch them and Chama becomes a wanted man. Soon afterwards land baron Frank Harlan (Robert Duvall) steps off the train with his 'associates', Lamarr Sims (Don Stroud), Olin Mingo (James Wainwright) and Roy Gannon (Paul Koslo), professional hunters and crack shots, armed with the latest weaponry – high-powered, long-range rifles with telescopic sights. They try to persuade Kidd to scout for them, in a manhunt for Chama; Kidd initially refuses but accepts when his farm is raided by Chama, his horses run off and his foreman Emilio trussed up with barbed wire. Kidd and the hunters head into the sierras, capture Chama's lover, Helen Sanchez (Stella Garcia), and hole up in Arroyo Blanco, Chama's home town. Harlan threatens to execute the local peons if Chama doesn't surrender. Kidd sides with the Mexicans, saves Helen and persuades Chama to return to Sinola to face trial. Back in town, Harlan and the manhunters lie in wait, but Kidd busts the ambush by driving a train through a drugstore, the Cattlemen's Association and into the appropriately named 'Railroad Saloon'. In a shootout Harlan is killed and the

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